



## City Council Meeting with the Neighborhoods

### Highlands and Norkirk Neighborhoods

Submitted Questions/Comments (11)

Meeting Date: November 20, 2013



#### Parks and Community Services

1. What is the status of the City building an indoor pool? (Preferably a wave pool, available for high school swim/dive teams.)

**Response:** The Kirkland City Council unanimously voted on September 17, 2013 to explore options to replace the Juanita High School pool. Specifically, the City Council amended its 2013-2014 Work Program to include a commitment that the City partner with LWSD as well as private and public organizations to consider options for replacing the Juanita Aquatic Center by the year 2017. On December 10, the City Council will have a study session to begin this process. For more information, contact Jennifer Schroder, CPRP Parks and Community Services Director, (425) 587-3301 [jschroder@kirklandwa.gov](mailto:jschroder@kirklandwa.gov)

#### Public Works Department

2. I live next to the 105th Lane cul-de-sac, in a house that is closest to the freeway. I don't understand why the sound barrier ends right before this development begins and then picks up again right after it ends. Is it because the developer of these properties would not pay the cost to put up a barrier when the houses were built? The freeway noise has become even worse since many trees were taken down to widen the freeway a few years back.

**Response:** The City of Kirkland has contacted the Public Information officer for the I-405 Project to get information about this request and will continue to work with the requestor until this issue is resolved. The contact information is Steve Peer Public Information I-405 Project 425-456-8624, fax 425-456-8600 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i405/>

3. Would Council consider banning plastic shopping bags and to-go containers? What about discouraging the use of disposable plastic water bottles?

**Response:** Kirkland Solid Waste staff recently published a report on single-use plastic bags which can be found on the City's website <http://www.kirklandwa.gov/Assets/Plastic+Bag+Staff+Report.pdf>. The City Council is scheduled to receive a briefing and discuss the report at a study session in early 2014. There currently is no effort underway to ban polystyrene to-go containers but staff continues to monitor the effects of bans in other communities like Issaquah and Seattle. City staff is also currently working with a consultant to audit the City's Kirkland Green Business Program in an effort to find ways to better recognize businesses for their leadership in sustainability such as voluntarily switching to compostable food service ware.

Kirkland Solid Waste continues to provide hundreds of free reusable aluminum water bottles to residents each year at recycling booths and special events. Recently, Solid Waste purchased and installed two water bottle filling stations at two public facilities that encourage the use of reusable water bottles by providing the user with feedback on how many plastic bottles have been saved by using the station. To see a station in action, please visit the Peter Kirkland Community Center.



## Planning and Community Development Department

4. What is the status of the Parkplace redevelopment? Totem Lake Mall?

**Response:** *Both projects have been approved, but for a variety of reasons, neither of the owners has decided to move forward with construction. Totem Lake Mall redevelopment is tied up with a legal dispute between the two property owners. Until recently, Parkplace owners had been looking to find tenants to fill a significant portion of the space before proceeding. Recently, however, the City was informed that the local partner (Touchstone) was bought out by the major equity partner (Prudential Insurance), so that Prudential is now the sole owner. The City has been told that Prudential is now evaluating options before deciding whether to proceed with the approved plans.*

5. What is likely to happen at Potala Village?

**Response:** *It is likely that the site will be developed, but it is not settled whether the development will be required to comply with the current Neighborhood Business (BN) zoning regulations or the BN regulations that were in effect when the applicant applied for a Shoreline Substantial Development (SDP) permit in 2011. The BN regulations were revised after the SDP application was filed, but before a building permit application was filed. The City asserted that vesting doesn't occur until a building permit application is filed, but the applicant disagreed and argued that vesting occurred when the SDP application was filed. The applicant sued the City and a Superior Court judge agreed with the applicant. However, the City has appealed that decision to the State Court of Appeals. It may be many months before the Court makes its decision on the matter. In the meantime, the applicant is preparing a building permit application on the basis of the Superior Court decision (old zoning rules). There are a number of differences between the old and new regulations, but the most significant is that the old zoning does not cap the number of units allowed on the property, while the new zoning limits the density to 48 units per acre. There are also a number of required mitigating measures that were established by the Environmental Impact Statement and these will need to be met regardless of the final vesting decision.*

6. The direction I see the Highlands Neighborhood going is to all million dollar homes and no large old growth trees as we currently have. This upsets me. I purchased my home in the Highlands Neighborhood in 1983. I love this neighborhood because of the old growth trees and the random mix of homes, all different styles ages and size. It does not feel like a development at all, but has a very unique character I personally love. I am watching this slowly go away as you the city continue to issue permits to demolish any and all of the smaller older homes in our area. And this is currently happening at a very rapid rate. Along with those homes goes the large trees located on the lot, and instead of one modest home, two or more homes worth a million (or close to that) go up and they have only postage stamp size yards. These homes to me all look the same. I guess it is not quite a development, but still..... Is that what the Highlands is going to be? Only million dollar homes and no old growth trees? Is Kirkland going to only be for the very wealthy? It is so distressful for me to hear you council people say you are not sure what to do about affordable housing when you continue to issue the permits to destroy anything that is even close to affordable. I also get upset when you say this city cares about their trees and yet it is no problem for a developer to take out as many as they like to put up a much larger fancier home. To me it seems it is only the builder who benefits in all of this, and it is only for the moment when the big dollars are made and then they move on and perhaps you the city also benefit by getting a higher tax revenue out of it all (why you do this yes?), but what do the rest of us in this community get out of it? Fewer trees, more really large homes, less options for a starter home, more traffic?

What is your vision for our neighborhood? How can we (you) stop the destruction of decent affordable housing in the Highlands? Or though out Kirkland for that matter.....

And saving a few of what might be left of our old large trees would be nice too.....

**Response:** *The City cannot legally prevent a land owner from demolishing a house and building a new more expensive house, as long as the new house complies with the zoning regulations pertaining to such things as minimum lot size, maximum height, required yards (setbacks), maximum lot coverage and maximum floor area. Market forces generally determine the price of a house constructed on a lot and Kirkland neighborhoods apparently command a high premium. Regulations do require that large trees be preserved but only where it is feasible given the allowed and desired placement of structures on the lot. Also, new trees are required to be planted to maintain a required tree density.*

*Providing affordable housing is a priority for the City, but this typically doesn't occur by preserving older single family houses. Unfortunately, just the high land values for most of those houses make them unaffordable for most middle or lower income families. Realistically, the most productive way to support housing affordability is to encourage the preservation of older multi-family housing projects and providing financial incentives to non-profit housing developers who can keep the rents at below market rates. The City has a number of regulations which provide those incentives, including density bonuses and fee waivers.*

## **Police Department**

7. Why is every third car on the streets of Kirkland at 8 a.m. Sunday morning a police car? There is nothing going on at that hour. Is the police union dictating deployment?

**Response:** *While it may appear that every third car at 8 am on a Sunday morning is a police car, in reality that is not the case. Several factors may contribute to this perception. First, the police cars are painted black and white on purpose to be highly visible. This is intentional. We want people to be aware that the police are in the area and on patrol. Second, traffic is very light on Sunday mornings. Due to the lack of traffic congestion, it is probable that one may see more patrol cars patrolling. Third, depending on where the author saw the police cars, it is possible they witnessed the officers driving to or from the police department for morning shift change. Kirkland has eight districts. On average there are only about 10 to eleven officers working, which includes supervisors. So the simple math equates out to one officer per district, a shift supervisor, and two roaming cars that serve as back up units of the district officers.*

8. The number of panhandlers in Kirkland has been increasing. Many of us want to help. Despite the fact that giving them money directly is not the best way to help, many people don't know this, or feel guilty if they don't give. Many cities, including Seattle, have a wonderful program called *Have a Heart, Give Smart*: <http://givesmartseattle.com/>. This program not only educates people about the most effective ways to give, but it sends street team members (including volunteers) to talk to people in need and help them find services. Has Kirkland ever considered such a program?

**Response:** *The City of Kirkland does not participate in "Have a Heart, Give Smart" but will discuss it with other Eastside Cities as a potential new opportunity. Human Service staff works with other cities, the county and churches to coordinate efforts to help those in need. Kirkland provides funding for an overnight Eastside Winter Shelter, a Men's and Women's Day Center and several other shelter, transitional and permanent housing programs for men, women, families and youth. Kirkland funds non-profit organizations that work with homeless individuals and families. City staff regularly participates in regional discussions with King County (10-year Plan to End Homelessness), the Eastside Homelessness Advisory Committee (EHAC), The Eastside Human Services Forum (EHSF) and other regional planning efforts that work to end homelessness in our region.*

*The cities of Redmond, Bellevue, and Kirkland recently came together to provide funding for a pilot project (Eastside Outreach to the Homeless) that will provide homeless outreach services in our communities. At a minimum, this program will be able to respond to calls to serve homeless individuals and respond by engaging and connecting individuals to resources in a timely way. The pilot period will run through December 31, 2014. If you have questions regarding any of these efforts, please contact Sharon Anderson Sanderson@kirklandwa.gov.*

*When Kirkland police officers do have a lawful purpose to contact homeless individuals they are referred to available resources for food and shelter such as local food banks, the Eastside tent city and other surrounding area shelter locations. Those that are found on private property are asked to move along and most voluntarily comply with such request. With those that appear to be in need of mental health assistance officers determine if they are an immediate threat to themselves or others, absent an evidence of those criteria they are referred to agencies that can provide that service and/or, those services are summoned to make contact with them as in the case of the mobile crisis team. It is the individual's choice whether they wish to utilize those resources.*

9. More than 120 cities across the country that are utilizing Nextdoor.com to encourage both residents and city departments to use technology to create safer, more well-connected communities.

Has Kirkland looked into using the services that Nextdoor.com provides Cities for connecting Police with the neighborhoods using Nextdoor.com?

**Response:** *The Police Department is not aware of any other City departments using it. Currently, the PD is not using it. However, we are aware of it as well as several other web sites and applications that do essentially the same thing. We are currently evaluating how we communicate with the community (including neighborhood groups) to determine how we can improve. Utilizing social media such as Nextdoor.com, Twitter, reverse 911, and other applications are all being considered or already in use.*

### **City Manager's Office**

10. What is the status of City support for community events such as 4th of July, holidays, and concerts?

**Response:** *The City Council received a report with a series of policy updates for special events at their October 1 meeting. Staff is in the process of preparing an ordinance for Council consideration that would update the Kirkland Municipal Code chapter on special events. At their November 6 Mid-Biennial Budget study session, the Council asked staff to provide a funding recommendation for community events. A funding recommendation will be presented along with the proposed ordinance at the December 10 City Council meeting.*

11. How does the Council evaluate the performance of the City Manager? What criteria, targets or goals are being used and how is Kurt Triplett meeting the Council's benchmarks?

**Response:** *Each year the City Council conducts a review of the performance of the City Manager. The review is designed to address the overall management and leadership performance of the City Manager during the preceding 12 months. The actual review is conducted in executive session as provided for in state law. The Council evaluates and discusses the City Manager's performance in several categories, including: communications; relationship with the Council; organization leadership and management; fiscal management; employee relations; planning, program development and follow-through; relationship with the community; and, intergovernmental and professional relationships. The Council recently completed the review of the City Manager's performance throughout the past year and the Council was in agreement that City Manager Kurt Triplett exceeds expectations in all categories.*